

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.

Form no.

6



Town Lexington

Address 1605 Massachusetts Ave.

Name Cary Memorial Hall

Present use Town Meetings

Present owner Town of Lexington

Description:

Date 1927

Source cornerstone

Style Colonial Revival

Architect Willard D. Brown and

Kilham, Hopkins & Greeley

Exterior wall fabric red brick with white
wood trim. Granite foundation

Outbuildings (describe) _____

Other features Part of a 3-building

complex including police station,

and town office building. cont'd.

Altered _____ Date _____

Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size:

One acre or less X Over one acre _____

Approximate frontage 200'

Approximate distance of building from street

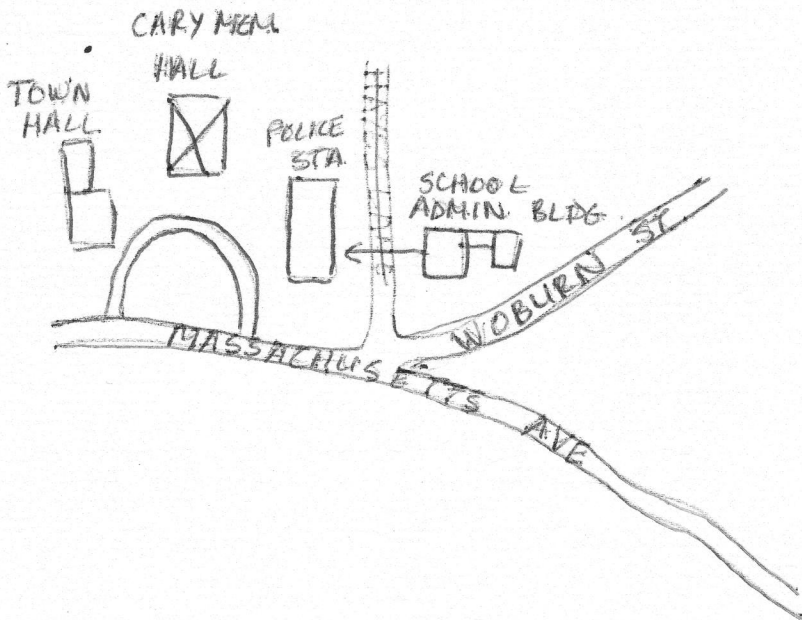
100'

6. Recorded by Harriet White

Organization MAPC

Date 8/1/78

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Town of Lexington

Original use town meetings

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates _____

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	_____	Exploration/	_____	Science/	_____
The Arts	_____	settlement	_____	invention	_____
Commerce	_____	Industry	_____	Social/	_____
Communication	_____	Military	_____	humanitarian	_____
Community development	_____	Political	<u>X</u>	Transportation	_____

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

Building was gift of Susanna Cary and Elizabeth Cary Farnham to the town in memory of their father Isaac Harris Cary (1803-1881). Interior plaque reads "Commemorates his interest in the early history of Lexington, his assistance to young men in improving their conditions in life and his desire to promote the intellectual and moral growth of this community which both father and daughters loved."

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Lexington	Form No:
Property Name: Cary Memorial Hall	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Other features:

2½ story building with projecting central pavilion, on raised granite foundation. Numerous Colonial Revival motifs include: applied colossal Ionic pilasters, demi lune window in pavilion gable, niches, panels, round-headed windows with divided sash, keystone window and door lintels, Elaborate fanlight over main entrance, less elaborate fanlights above 2 subsidiary entrances. All 3 entrances have double doors. Parapet gable with plain panels. Clock on parapet ornamented with swags.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
LEXINGTON

Property Address
1605 MASS. AVE.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

A	6
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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

In the late 17th and 18th century this land was owned by the Estabrook family and was originally the site of the parsonage of Benjamin Estabrook, built by the town for its first minister c.1694. The parsonage was subsequently torn down c.1800. In April 1827, the "front lands" of the Estabrook estate was sold to Hammond A. Hosmer, an "innholder" from Boston. Worthen believes he might have been related to the Estabrook family. On May 25, 1847, Hosmer sold to Abijah W. Farrar the site of the Cary Memorial Building. The land was later the site of the so-called Shaw and Plumer houses which were torn down to make way for Cary Memorial Hall.

Construction of the Isaac Harris Cary Memorial Hall was funded by the estates of Susanna E. Cary and her sister, Eliza Cary Farnham. The intention of the sisters' bequest was to erect a memorial to their father, Isaac Harris Cary. The Cary Educational Fund trustees were instructed to secure a site in Lexington and erect a fireproof building suitable for the safe storage and exhibition of relics. The building was to also contain a hall adapted for lectures and public meetings. The Old Town Hall, located at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Waltham Street, was torn down in 1928. It had been constructed in 1871 and designed by architect Gridley Bryant.

Cary Memorial Hall was designed by the firm of Kilham, Hopkins & Greeley with Willard D. Brown serving as associate architect. James Stuart Smith served as chairman of the building committee. The contractor for the construction was awarded to John W. Duff, Inc. The cornerstone was laid on June 9, 1927; the building was completed and furnished and the grounds were graded by the fall of 1928. Dedication exercises were held on October 18, 1928. The total cost of the land, grading, building and furnishings was approximately \$420,000.

Inside, the Hall is graced with a proscenium stage, arched windows, Corinthian pilasters and other Colonial details. It includes seating for 780, with approximately half of the seating on the floor and half on the mezzanine level. Cary Hall was designed for perfect acoustics and the chairs and tables were made to order by a master craftsman from birds-eye maple using timbers from an ancient mill in New Hampshire. Cary Memorial Hall has provided the community with a year round site musical programming and popular events for more than eighty years.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*. Cambridge: The Riverside Press Co., 1913.
Kelly, Beverly Allison. *Lexington: A Century of Photographs*. Lexington Historical Society, 1980.
Worthen, Edwin B. *A Calendar History of Lexington, Massachusetts, 1620-1946*. Lexington: 1946.
Worthen, Edwin B. *Tracing the Past in Lexington, Massachusetts*. New York: Vantage Press, Inc., 1998: 164-172.

Supplement prepared by:
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December 2009

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